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**CONTENT STANDARDS ADOPTED IN THE  
VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

SACRAMENTO—Dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts took a big step toward inclusion in the instructional program for students in public schools throughout California. At its January 10 meeting, the State Board of Education (SBE) adopted standards that will guide school districts in developing comprehensive arts education programs at all grade levels.

“For the first time, we are stating explicitly the content and skills students need to acquire in the visual and performing arts,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Delaine Eastin. As students master the content defined in the standards, achievement in the arts in California schools will equal that in the best educational systems in other states and nations.

“The standards come at a time when there is increased recognition by educators, researchers, and the public that, through a visual and performing arts program—grounded in standards and built on prior skills and knowledge—our students will learn to participate in and contribute to society in intelligent and sensitive ways,” said Eastin. “Students will understand the role of the arts in the life of the individual and in the collective life of American culture; and they will be better equipped for the increasing number of jobs in California and the nation that require visual and performing arts-related skills.”

As stated in its position statement, the California State PTA believes that the arts can teach a common core of knowledge that will help students appreciate and understand human history and cultures, develop higher order thinking skills, express their own creativity, and develop a life-long appreciation of the arts.

MORE...MORE...MORE

While the adoption of the arts standards do not provide a mandate, the adoption does send the message that all students should be provided with the opportunity to learn and benefit from arts education. The standards are designed to provide students with an arts program that will help them develop and demonstrate literacy in and through dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts. They support the arts as discreet subject areas and support learning across the academic curriculum areas. The standards also promote the inclusion of opportunities for students to participate in arts related school-to-career experiences and to use new technologies.

Standards-based education maintains California's tradition of respect for local control of schools. Local school officials and teachers—with the support and cooperation of families, businesses, and community partners—are encouraged to use the arts standards adopted by the SBE as a basis for designing the specific curricular and instructional strategies that best deliver the content to their students. Many districts in collaboration with local arts agencies and organizations have already begun long range planning for the gradual implementation of a comprehensive, standards-based arts education program.

The arts standards, as presented to the SBE, are available on the California Department of Education's Web site at [www.cde.ca.gov/shsd/arts](http://www.cde.ca.gov/shsd/arts), and will be published before the end of the year. A new visual and performing arts on-line arts resource center at [www.teachingarts.org](http://www.teachingarts.org) is scheduled to be launched in mid February. The site will feature resources that will help districts develop standards-based arts curriculum. The California Arts Project at [www.ucop.edu/tcap](http://www.ucop.edu/tcap) offers professional development sessions and resources for school districts in developing and implementing standards-based instruction.

**For more information, please contact Patty Taylor, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, California Department of Education, at 916/323-6041; e-mail: [pataylor@cde.ca.gov](mailto:pataylor@cde.ca.gov).**

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